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PROGRESS OF THE WORLD

The President in his first address to the Congress continued the practice of personal and oral delivery which his predecessor had revived from the example of the two eighteenth century administrations, and which we may hope will henceforth be the general custom. Apart from others, perhaps more commonly remarked, the spoken address has these two very real advantages over the written message: It is almost certain to be shorter, and more popular in style. It might be preferable to say, less prolix and less technical. We have known some former messages which were so long and so filled with statistics and technicalities that it seemed inconceivable that anybody would read them through, save the reading clerks of the Congress, and the proofreaders of newspapers. Now since in recent years such utterances have come to be more and more intended for the public as well as for the Congress, it is obvious that when thus framed they must largely fail of their desired effect. There can be no doubt that the better form is the oral address of moderate length and of matter and style interesting to the average citizen as well as informing to members of the Congress; for the establishment or reestablishment of which, we owe thanks to Presidents Wilson and Harding.

John Burroughs had lived so long and had won so vital a place in innumerable minds and hearts that his death is scarcely realizable. Of course in a certain grateful sense he is not dead and cannot die. His works, his teachings, his influence for the love of nature, are imperishable. He was the latest survivor, and not the least, of a noteworthy company or succession of American naturalists who were not merely naturalists but also great moralists. That was because they were students and teachers not merely of flora and fauna, but also of abstract truth, to which they were nobly inspired by contemplation of the concrete truths

of nature. It would be a poor tribute to pay to Burroughs, to say that he was the last of his line and would have no successor. Such teaching as his must have inspired many to follow his example, among whom a few may arise to eminence comparable with his own. For that to happen would be the best possible testimony to the greatness of his life and work.

The Bureau of Education at Washington expresses the cheerful hope that the next generation of Americans will be practically free from illiteracy. This is based upon the census returns from three States, and the District of Columbia. In thirty years, we are told, illiteracy has declined in Alabama from 41 to 16.1 per cent; in Arkansas from 26.6 to 9.4; in Delaware from 14.3 to 5.9; and in the Federal District from 13.2 to 2.8 per cent. Such progress is certainly gratifying, and we shall hope to see it maintained in the returns from all the States, though we must confess that our hope is not very strong in relation to some of them. And we cannot forget that during the Great War practically one-fourth of all the men drafted were illiterate. Now the young men of military age are to be supposed to be one of the most literate of all the elements of population. If they were, as they were found to be, 24.9 per cent illiterate, for the whole country, what must have been the percentage of illiteracy in the rest of the population? There is, of course, the possibility, not agreeable to contemplate, that in the selective conscription a certain proportion of young men falsely declared themselves illiterate, in order to secure exemption, as they hoped, from the draft, who last year, under the civilian census, recorded themselves as literate. We should hate, however, to suppose that they were numerous. It is better to be illiterate than to be a Bergdoll.

Professor Albert Einstein has been welcomed to this country and his theory of "Relativity" has been gravely listened to and discussed by myriads who have little conception of what it is all about. As the advocate of Jewish restoration to Palestine he has met with more appreciative and sympathetic interest. His lament over the losses to science "through the action of political misfortune" and his hope that "the field of activity of

scientific men may be reunited" doubtless command sympathy, but they also inevitably provoke the retort that what he deplores was in fact largely brought about through the perversion and degradation of science. Not in our generation will or should the world forget that a large company of German scientists, comprising practically every first-class authority in that country, deliberately put their signatures and lent the support of their reputations to one of the most wickedly and wantonly lying statements ever coined by wholly unscrupulous knaves, and that not one of them, so far as the world knows, has ever manifested fitting contrition for their monstrous crime.

The President "improved the occasion" of the dedication of the Bolivar statue in New York with an address, the last echoes of which have not yet been heard in either the New World or the Old. Apart from his benevolent expression of this country's attitude toward its southern neighbors, which we are glad to see was universally accepted at its face value and heartily acclaimed throughout Latin America, he made a reassertion and interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine which must have been gratefully reassuring to some, prudently admonitory to others, and profitably informing to all, in both hemispheres. As for the occasion, it was most felicitous. The United States, in the heart of its metropolis, cannot too highly honor the memory of that great Latin American who more nearly than any other man in the history of these continents, approximated to the moral and patriotic stature of Washington himself.

One of the most hopeful and heartening achievements of recent time in the "Black Belt" of the South was the conviction and sentencing to life imprisonment of a white plantation owner for the murder of a number of negro peons—euphemism for slaves. Of course, if the case had been reversed, and a negro had been charged with the murder of white men, there would have been no life sentence, but a summary lynching, probably with additions of revolting torture. Still, it is a great gain for justice to have a Georgia court convict and sentence a white man for the murder of a negro. It is a great gain for humanity to have the infamous

and degrading system of peonage exposed for the aggravated slavery which it is. It is a most auspicious gain for good government to have the Governor of the State bravely denounce the system of peonage, with which, he declares, the State reeks, as comparable with the Belgian atrocities in the Congo which roused the indignant protests of the world. In some counties of the "Empire State of the South," Governor Dorsey says, "the negro is being driven out as though he was a wild beast. In others he is being held as a slave. In others, no negroes remain." And he cites no fewer than 135 cases of atrocities committed against negroes in the last two years, in only two of which the victims were charged with outrages upon white women; adding that if an effort were made to collect reports of all cases, the number could be multiplied. When the Governor of a State speaks thus and takes such a stand, there is hope of ending a condition of affairs which is as degrading to the perpetrators and tolerators as it is cruel to the victims of the outrages.

The menace of a general strike of the great industries of the United Kingdom has been averted, through the resolute and rational stand of the Government, and the danger of its repetition has been greatly diminished by a schism among the labor unionists. The strike was ordered by the miners, who promptly put themselves entirely in the wrong and alienated all public sympathy by two acts. One was, to demand, without admitting argument, an increase of wages which they conceded the mine-owners could not afford to pay, but which they insisted must be granted to them by the Government as a subsidy out of the national treasury. The other was, to insist that, pending settlement, the pumps should not be kept running or the mines be cared for in any way, since they regarded destruction of property as their strongest stock in trade in the controversy. At that there was nothing to be done but for the Government and the public to present a solid front against the miners, which was done with splendid spirit. The miners then called upon the other members of the "Triple Alliance," the railroad workmen and the transport workers, to join them in a universal strike which would paralyze industry and starve the nation into sub-

jection. The Government and people prepared to meet even this with tranquil and efficient fortitude, but it was not necessary. The other two unions would not support the outrageous demands of the miners, and declined to join in the strike, which thereupon collapsed. Finally the miners, resenting the refusal of the others to support them, withdrew from the "Triple Alliance." The whole incident serves as a convincing demonstration that Great Britain does not purpose to have a political revolution in the abused name of industry.

The advent of the "daylight saving" season was marked with various circumstances obviously making for radical and definitive action by the supreme authority. New York and New Jersey were without State laws on the subject, but permitted municipalities to do as they pleased. The result was that in most of the large cities daylight saving was adopted and was put into effect, while elsewhere standard time prevailed. Railroads ran some trains on one schedule and some on another, so that the five o'clock local train started from the terminal at five o'clock local time but four o'clock by the railroad's own station clock, and the five o'clock express started at five by the station clock but at six o'clock by local time and by the watches of its passengers. Such confusion was bad enough. But another and still more critical aspect was given to the case in Connecticut. There the Legislature, not content with refusing to enact daylight saving, passed a law forbidding it. In defiance of that enactment the capital city of the State, Hartford, adopted a daylight saving ordinance and put it into effect; whereupon members of the Legislature proposed to declare the city in revolt against the authority of the State, and to annul or suspend its charter until such time as it complied with the law requiring standard time. It was also charged that the city was violating the laws of the United States, which had established the standard time zones. If the latter charge were true, of course it must have been equally true of the cities of New York and New Jersey, and of some other States, which adopted daylight saving. The lesson of the whole business obviously is that Congress should

exercise its Constitutional power, and perform its Constitutional duty, of prescribing uniform time-measurements and reckonings for the whole country.

The principle of restricted and selective immigration seems at last to be established, with ground for hope that in future and at leisure the Congress will develop and perfect the system in accordance with the needs and welfare of the country. There never was a time when we were either legally or morally bound to open our doors to all comers, though for some time our needs of labor seemed to be so great as to warrant the reception of all immigrants who presented themselves, and there were times when humanity seemed to require us to give asylum to many who were persecuted and oppressed on political or religious grounds. There is to-day little if any need of such asylum, and our needs of labor do not appear to demand unrestricted immigration. We cannot, of course, discriminate against particular nationalities or races, unless they assent to it by special agreement. But we can limit the number to be received from all on a percentage basis, and we can enact tests of fitness for admission which will assure immigrants of the best quality. There is no better established principle than that of the right of a country to decide for itself who shall be its guests.